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al guide for the visit to the of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois

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"Au Louvre" le magasin du Goût et de la Qualité

PRACTICAL GUIDE

FOR THE VISIT TO THE CHURCH OF

Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois

I. SEEING THE CHURCH

A. — THE PORCH, 15th CENTURY

Constructed by Jean Gaussel (1431-1439). Five arcades, ogival style. See: 1°) **The keystones of the arch :** in the center, S. G. (Saint-Germain) substituted for fleurs-de-lys and symbols of the four Evangelists ; to the right, the Lord's Supper ; to the left, Adoration of the Shepherds ; 2°) at the springing and the top of the arches, the ornemented consoles ; 3°) **the decoration** of the arches, small side doors and pedestals : vinewreaths, ivy, thistle, tiny animals play, nibble and gnaw : the whole porch is as full of life as the undergrowth of a forest ; 4°) among the **statues of the columns of the façade :** St Mary the Egyptian (with the three loaves of bread she had as food in the desert) and St Francis of Assisi (very much deteriorated) ; these are the only statues which are ancient (16 Century).

Paintings : 19 Century (Mottez 1845) ; restoration 1855 : irreparably ruined by weather. Subject : The Teaching of the Gospel ; on the left, Jesus and the doctors ; Sermon on the Mount ; on the right : the Mission of the Apostles, Pentecost ; and in the center : the Calvary.

The first and 5 th arcades each support a square room.

B. — CENTRAL PORTAL, 13th CENTURY

1o) Splaying : six statues dating from the 16 th Century. On the right : Saint Germain, bishop ; Saint Genevieve, (lighted taper which a demon tries to extinguish) and an angel (ready to relight it). On the left : Saint Vincent, deacon and martyr (?), a king (?), a queen (?). Note the figures supporting these statues : Dacien, prefect of Saragosse, who condemned Saint Vincent (?), a crouching man ; demons...

2o) Pier : Statue of the Virgin (modern).

3o) Coving of Arch. **First cordon :** on the left, Abraham and the just ones « in Abraham's bosom ». On the right, demons and damned (bishop with a mitre, prince and burgher) ; along the ogive : angels. **Second cordon :** on the left, the wise virgins, lamps lit, humbly dressed ; on the right the foolish virgins, lamps empty, dressed fashionably in the 13 th Century style ; at the top, divine hands and banderoles :

« Come and Enter », « I do not know you ». **Third cordon :** The twelve Apostles, characterized by the instruments of their suffering and torture.

As you enter the church, stop beneath the organ loft : **general view :** elegant lines, graceful proportions (78 by 39 meters) contrast of light and shade ; in back, the veiled brilliance of the stained glass window of the apse ; the axis of the church curves slightly. *Go towards the right-hand side aisle. As you come to it, observe the receding perspective before you ; in the back, in the halfdark, the column and its tracery of rib-moulding...*

C. — PARISH CHAPEL
14th and 15th CENTURIES
(key to the Sacristy)

Enclosed by sculptured woodwork, it forms a small church within the large one (choir, pulpit, confessional).

Antiquities : 1°) Keystones (Saint Germain) ; (Saint Christopher carrying the Infant Jesus) ; 2°) above the altar : **a retable of the 16th century,** (tree of Jesse), work of the Champagne district, and **statue of the Virgin ;** 3°) Ornaments of the choir-arch (16 th Century).

Decoration. Paintings : 19 Century, in the

style of the Italian primitives (Amaury Duval). Stained glass windows, 19th Century (like all those of the periphery of the church) ; ancestors of the Virgin or characters of the Old Testament who foreshadowed her.

D. — TRANSEPT 14th CENTURY, ADDED TO IN THE 15th CENTURY

Six stained glass windows (four in the north arm, two in the south arm) and **two rose windows** marvellous arrangement of colour-tones and reflected light. They must be studied one after another, beginning with those of the north or left arm : *go across the nave.*

1°) **North transept.** *a)* **Rose window :** Dismantled and poorly put together again : the sky, the Eternal Father (in papal dress), angels, and saints.

b) **Stained glass windows** (with many subjects). **On your left,** two windows. FIRST, THE ONE NEAREST THE NAVE : scenes of the martyrdoms of Saint Vincent (exposed to wild beasts, thrown into water) and of Saint Sixte (decapitated). Below : on the left, Saint Peter, on the right, Saint Anne and Saint Mary. Below : arms of donators, (as in others windows). Note : Gothic architecture, bold colors, delicate design.

THEN THE OTHER WINDOW (5 lancets) ; miracles of Christ. Note : the architecture already

showing Renaissance influence, pale colouring, dominated by the *violet* of the Christ (the whole very harmonious).

IN BOTH WINDOWS, the composition of the vignettes was inspired by the pictures of the mysteries so dear to the 15 th Century : types, costumes, hairdress, hose, etc...

On your right : subject of the two stained glass windows : the Passion of Jesus, from the Lord's Supper (large window, lower right vignette), to the Laying in the Tomb (small window, upper right vignette). The whole story can be followed below from right to left to right above. Bed-valance : escutcheons with emblems of the Passion. Note in the large window : crude colouring, architecture completely Renaissance, in the little window : more somber colouring, the whole heavier in appearance, architecture half-Gothic, half Renaissance : this window seems to be the oldest of all (beginning of the 15 th Century).

II. **South transept** (right hand side aisle) *a*) **Rose window :** (Pentecost, deteriorated) ;

b) **Stained glass windows** (with main and secondary subjects). FIRST, THE ONE NEAREST THE NAVE : **the Assomtion ;** secondary subjects : an angel gives the girdle of the Virgin to Saint Thomas ; above, coronation of the Virgin. Period : End of the 15 th, beginning of

the 16 th Century. Note : dress less conformable to the style of the period, elegance of the angels, type of characters : Dürer, Cranach...

THEN, THE OTHER WINDOW (5 lancets) : **The doubting of saint Thomas ;** secondary subjects : above, Ascension of Our Lord, Period : 16 th Century. Note the superb Renaissance architecture, the sophisticated composition of the scene, costumes draped in the antique manner, the splendour of the human characters : we are far from the Middle Ages !

In this same south arm of the transept : Holy water fount (19 th Century) sculptured by F. Jouffroy after a design by Mme de Lamartine. Paintings by Guichard (1843-45).

Then return to the door of the choir and see : On each side, **looking towards the choir,** polychrome statues of Saint Germain (in wood) and Saint Vincent (in stone) of the 14 th and 15 th centuries. **Wrought-iron grillwork** (18 th century). Numerous stalls (chapter of canons, until 1744) ; columns and consoles in the classical style (altered in 1745) ; high altar of the 17 th century, stained glass windows of the 19 th. **Towards the nave : monumental church wardens' pew.** (17 th century) built for the royal family ; **crucifix** by Bouchardon (18 th century) ; pulpit (17 th) — ; at the back : organs (at the Sainte-Chapelle before 1790) ; above, the glimmering of a rose window.

If you have five minutes, sit down and read our historical notes, page 9 ; you have now seen enough to arouse your interest in them. Then resume your walk along the right side-aisle.

E. — PERIPHERY OF THE CHOIR

The arch supports the 12 th century tower (belfry) where hangs the « La Marie » bell which tolled the signal for what is known as the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre. See page 11 A. On the right, a lovely 15 th century door, surmounted by a **statue of the Virgin** (14 th century) ; then three chapels with stained glass windows designed by Viollet-le-Duc. Next comes the **door of the former sacristy.** Above, an ex-voto in remembrance of the restoration of the church (1836-1845) ; poor-box with mosaics and frescoes (Mottez). Next, the Chapel of Saint Landry (statues of Etienne d'Aligre and his son, chancellors of France in the 17 th century, by L. Magnier). Then the apse : three chapels with a flatbackground : 1) Good Death (ancient bas-relief), paintings by Guichard (1855), stained glass windows which Huysmans admired ; *Pieta* by Bonnardel (1859). 2) The Passion (Christ in the Tomb) under the altar ; paintings in the antique style (Couder, 1844) ; **modern stained glass windows** designed after those of the Sainte-Chapelle ; 3) Patron Saints (statues of the members of the de Rostaing family).

Turning towards the aisle, you see the stained glass window in back, opening on the facade, then, diagonally beyond the nave, the symetrical window and, in the south transept, a section of the stained glass window of the Assumption : at sunset, in fine weather, this becomes one flood of dazzling light.

On the right, a platform set with glass, constructed for Queen Marie-Amelie, wife of King Louis-Philippe (1830-1848).

The 4 th chapel is of Notre-Dame-de-Bonne-Garde (Our Lady of Safe-Keeping) object of special worship (former chapel of Saint Louis : stained glass window). Statue and woodwork formerly in the parish chapel : see page 15 G. After crossing the transept, Chapel of the Compassion : **magnificent retable** (16 th Century) originally from a Belgian church (genealogy of the Virgin, scenes from the life of Christ).

When leaving the church, look at its silhouette dominated by a statue of Saint Michel. You are leaving one of the most beautiful churches in Paris.

If you have a few minutes to walk along it as far as the apse, by the streets of Pretres Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, you will see the charming details in its pinnacles, gables, (former store-rooms) gargoyles, etc... (16 th century).

II. HISTORICAL NOTES

Origins. — 7 th century (Clovis II) at the latest, through the efforts of Saint Landry, bishop of Paris, for the faithful of the right bank (outside the walls) ; was the baptistery of the whole territory from Chatelet to St-Ouen and St-Cloud ; hence the name « Great Parish ». — Saint Landry was buried in Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois : his chapel is still there (page 7).

Dedicated to Saint Germain, bishop of Auxerre (5 th century), the worship of whom was for a long time, in France and abroad, (particularly in England) equal to the worship of Saint Martin of Tours. It was he who revealed her calling to Saint Genevieve : Paris thus owes him its patron saint. To the memory of Saint Germain is joined that of Saint Vincent, deacon and martyr, who was the patron of the parish clergy.

The church was reconstructed twice. 1°) In the 11 th century, by Robert the Pious, who established a chapter of canons ; the only thing left of this reconstruction is the square tower at the angle of the right transept ; — 2°) from the 13 th century onwards, on a much larger scale.

The church at present (78 by 39 meters at the transept). — Parts constructed **in the 13th century:** central door, choir, apse ; — **in the 14th and 15th:** nave, first aisles, with side chapels, which to day are no longer there) ; aisles of the choir ; — **in the middle of the 15th century:** porch ; — **in the 16th century:** second side aisles (replacing the primitive side chapels ; at that time set back between the outside buttresses) ; two ends of the transept on the width of a window ; portals of the transept (and to the left of the apse) ; decoration of the outside of the building. — The inside was painted (arch in French blue and golden fleur-de-lys), illuminated by very beautiful stained glass windows (6 of which remain) ; a rood screen, the work of Pierre Lescot and Jean Goujon (some fragments of it have been preserved in the Renaissance Hall of the Louvre.

Collegiate and Parish. — Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, because of its origin and the extent of its territory, was, next to Our-Lady and Saint-Denis, the most important church of the diocese: « Child of the bishop », unlike all the other « children of the Chapter of Our-Lady ». It was a collegiate church : a chapter of 15 canons and eleven chaplains. Since the construction of the first Louvre on its territory (12 th century),

it was also the royal parish ; the parish services took place in the little church inside which still bears the name of the Parish Chapel (page 3).

Some dates *A.* **16th** century. 1) **august 23-24, 1572 :** the ringing of the matins for St-Bartholomew's Day was the signal for the massacre of the Protestants. Only one of the bells which rang then still remains.

2) **April 3, 1594** (Palm Sunday) : Henry IV, the day after his conversion and entry into Paris (March 22) offered the blessed bread to Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and took part in the Procession, carrying a palm. He thus made it known that peace had been made between him and the Curé of the royal church : J. B. Cueilly, fearless Leaguer, whose anger had only been brought to a pitch of fury by the conversion of Henry of Navarre. The violence of his sermons was such that he had to be arrested at the end of March. Henry had him freed and succeeded, if not in winning him to his side, at least in pacifying him.

B. **17th** century. 1) **March 25th, 1617.** — Concini, marshal of Ancre, favourite of Louis XIII, finally fallen into disgrace, was arrested at the order of the king and, placing his hand on his sword, was struck and killed. The jealousies, resentments and hates aroused by his abuses ex-

ploded. His body buried at night under the nave (to the left of the large portal) was dug up by the mob the next morning, dragged through the church, then as far as Pont-Neuf, and hung from the gallows that Concini himself had had built.

2) **1643.** — Anne of Austria, after 20 years of sterility, finally awaited motherhood. The Curé Colombel (1636-1660), an excellent man and a good adviser of Saint Vincent de Paul and the queen, announced the good news from the pulpit and added « If the queen gives us a princess, we shall hardly be further ahead than we were, because of the Salic Law. So let us pray to God that she may have a prince... However, my bretheren, *there is what there is* : let us pray to God for this soul ». Well, « *there was* » no more or less than : Louis XIV. This birth was the occasion of the celebrated vow of Louis XIII and for this church, the renovation of the Parish Chapel (Page 3 c). It was decorated in the style of the period. After the pillaging of 1831, only the statue of the Virgin and some wood-mouldings were left of this decoration ; they have been placed since in the Chapel of Our Lady of Safe-Keeping, (N. D. de bonne Garde) (page 8).

3) **1645.** Removal of the pier of the large portal (put back in the 19 th century) and the

pieces of sculpture which surmounted it (scenes of the Last Judgement).

4) **Christmas 1649.** — Cardinal of Retz, coadjutor of Paris, in the pulpit. « I preached on Christmas Day at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. I spoke then of Christian charity, without one mention of present affairs ». (This was in the middle of the War of the Fronde). « The women wept over the injustice of the persecution visited on an archbishop who had only tenderness for his enemies, and as I left the pulpit, I well knew, by the blessings given to me, that I was not mistaken in my belief that my sermon would have a good effect. It was unbelievable and far surpassed what I had imagined ».

5) **1684.** Construction of monumental pew (designed by Ch. Lebrun and Claude Perrault).

C. **18th century.** 1) **1728.** Stained glass windows of the nave replaced by white framed glass to improve the lighting.

2) **1744.** Elimination of the Chapter of Canons, united with that of Our-Lady. (Notre Dame). The whole church was put at the service of the parish : then there followed large-scale and deplorable alterations to please the century's taste (1745-1748) : *a*) Scratching out of the paintings of the arch and walls, and whitewashing ; *b*) Destruction of the rood-screen (to give an unobstructed view of the choir) ; *c*) Re-

moval of the spire and bell-turrets on the bell-tower, and their replacement by a gallery with balustrade. *d*) Destruction of the stained glass windows of the choir (see 1728) ; *e*) Retouching of the architecture of the choir : flute columns, wreathed cornices ; removal of small columns, consoles and classical patterns. etc... ; *f*) Replacing of the statue of Saint Michel on the central gable by a weathervane. These alterations were mostly the work of the architect Bacarit, approved by the Academy of Fine Arts.

3) **1748.** Installation of the splendid wrought-iron grillwork enclosing the choir (Pierre Dumiez).

4) From the end of the 17 th century until the Revolution, the French Academy had a solemn mass celebrated, in music, on the occasion of the distribution of its annual prizes. The panegyric of Saint-Louis, patron saint of the Academy was delivered. The ceremony, re-established in 1814, was held until 1830. The orchestra and the choirs occupied a high platform raised in the north transept.

D. **Revolution.** — 1) **August 6th, 1790.** The daughter of Louis XVI (already imprisoned in the Louvre) : Marie-Therese of France, later Duchess of Angouleme, had her First Communion among the children of the parish.

2) **1792.** — Intallation at Saint-Germain-l'Au-

xerrois of the organs of the Sainte-Chapelle.

3) **1793-1802.** — The Church became a fodder store-room, then a printing establishment, then a temple of Reason (theophilantropic cult). Given over to worship by the Concordat.

E. **Restauration.** — The parish then had a period of splendor, particularly during the reign of Charles X, whose piety was as active as it was sincere. The royal Easter at the beginning of Holy Week, and the ceremonies of Corpus Christi, when the processions spread as far as the court of the Louvre, were solemnities of great brilliance.

G. **July monarchy.** — 1) **Pillaging of the 13th of february 1831.** The anniversary service for the repose of the soul of the Duke of Berry, assassinated in 1820, became the occasion of a violent outburst against the Legitimist Party : the church was thoroughly sacked, historical and artistic tresures burnt or pillaged ; in the pile of ruins, the only thing left intact was the statue of the Virgin, at present in the chapel of Our Lady of Safe Keeping (Notre Dame de Bonne Garde). The church remained closed until 1837 : a workshop for the construction of aerostats was made of it ; it was even planned to demolish it in order to open a new street towards the Place du Trône.

2) **1837-1847.** — Opened for worship in 1837, the inside of the church was restored (Lassus, Balthard, Viollet-le-Duc : almost all the stained glass windows date from that period ; paintings enumerated above) ; as well as the exterior (paintings and small statues of the porch, except for two (see page 1).

3) Tribune of Queen Marie-Amelie : constructed to the left of the choir for the presence of the queen at services.

H. **Second Empire.** — Clearing of the ground surrounding the church, ordering of the Place du Louvre, construction of the tower of Viollet-le-Duc (carrillons at 11 A. M. and 4 P. M.) between the church and the mairie (town hall of district) : false facade to match that of the church.

TOMBS OF THE CHURCH.

Many great people, illustrious in the history of the State, of Literature, the Sciences and the Arts, have been buried in Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. The monuments raised in their memory have almost all disappeared. Their ashes still rest in the church. Here are some names, among many others.

Jodelle, † 1573.
Malherbe, † 1628.

Etienne d'Aligre, chancellor of France, † 1635 and his son, † 1677.

Jacques Le Mercier † 1670, architect to Louis XIII. (Pavillons de l'horloge of the Louvre, designs of Saint-Roch, of the Oratory, of the Val-de-Grace, of the Sorbonne ; plans of the city, of the church and of the castle of Richelieu).

Louis le Vau, † 1670, architect to Louis XIV. (Colonnade of the Louvre after the designs of Perrault).

Guy Patin † 1672.

Noêl Coypel † 1707, painter.

Anne and André Dacier, † 1720-1722, scholars.

Antoine Coysevox, † 1720, sculptor.

R. I. P.

HOURS OF THE SERVICES

WEEKS DAY MASSES

7 h., 7 h. 30 and 8 h. a. m. Low Mass

SUNDAY MASSES

7 h., 8 h., 9 h. a. m. Low mass

10 h., a. m. High Mass.

11 h. 15 a. m. Low Mass, with on organ Recital by Maitre Jean Pergola, the Church Organist.

(The Programm for each Sunday is posted ad the entrance of the Church, under the Organ).

5 h. 30 p. m. Low Mass.

The Church is open every day from 7 a. m. to 7 h. p. m., **without interruntion.**

A Priest is present at all times during these hours for confession, arrangements for masses and any other inquiries.

It would be duply appreciated if our visitors would consent by their offerings, to aid our parish, our summer camps (money for more than 2.500 camp days is neeted for the summer) and our social works (persons in need, care of the sick and a restauration for women).

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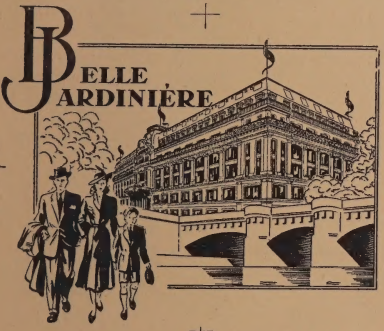

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